

Preventing criminal exploitation

Of children and vulnerable young adults

The criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults is an issue across the UK. We need to be sure of the signs and know what we can do to help prevent this from happening.

This is being done well in Greater Manchester by [Programme Challenger](#) with their Trapped campaign, and the information they've created is useful for all front-line staff in Rotherham.

What is criminal exploitation?

Criminal exploitation takes many forms, but a lot of it relates to supplying and moving drugs, offences involving guns and other weapons, money laundering and violent offences. In some cases, criminals can take control of someone's home by force to use as a base to store drugs, firearms and often run their criminal activity. This is called 'cuckooing'.

'County Lines' is a term used by police and law enforcement across the UK to describe the approach taken by gangs and criminal networks in urban areas who visit smaller or coastal towns to sell class A drugs. These gangs use children, young people and vulnerable adults to sell drugs. Victims are deceived, intimidated, beat up and groomed until they agree to commit crimes.

The criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults doesn't only relate to drugs - it can include other criminal activity such as arson, violent offences, storing firearms and holding money. The movement of a person for the purposes of exploitation is detailed in the Modern Slavery Act 2015 as a form of trafficking and slavery.

We need to work with schools, children's and adults' services, housing, health, communities and other partners to raise awareness with young people and vulnerable adults so they know when someone is trying to exploit them and know there's a safe way to report their concerns.

What can we do to prevent or stop this?

We need to raise awareness of all forms of criminal exploitation, recognising that young people and vulnerable adults may feel trapped and need support to find a way out.

If you see anything that's not right when you're visiting people or conducting interviews, you should tell your manager and report your concerns. You can do this by making a safeguarding referral using your organisation's safeguarding pathway. Or, if you have a safeguarding concern about a child, contact Rotherham **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** on **01709 336080** or complete the [child online referral form](#). For safeguarding concerns about adults, contact **Rotherham Single Point of Access** on **01709 822330** or complete the [adult online referral form](#).

If a child or adult is in **immediate danger**, call **999**. If the child or adult is not in immediate danger but you believe a crime may have been committed, call the **Police** on **101**. Anyone can provide information anonymously to [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111



The [Trapped video](#) shows just how easy it is for people to be groomed to commit crimes. It tells the story of a young man in Manchester who wants to raise the money to take part in a sports competition in America. It shows how quickly people can become desperate – trapped - with no clear way out. These people are being forced into crime and should be considered victims rather than criminals. Watch this video and encourage others to watch it too.